

# What’s Happened So Far?

**East American Falls Interchange Feasibility Study (2003 - 2004)**  
The feasibility study explored the need for an interchange improvement project and several potential alternatives. The study found significant cracking and deterioration on the interchange bridge. Turning radii on ramps vary from 30 to 75 feet, inadequate for today’s interstate truck/trailer combinations. The study also stated that the eastbound vertical clearance of 14 feet 7 inches is nearly two feet below the current 16 1/2 foot requirement. The feasibility study did not perform a detailed environmental analysis on the alternatives.

**I-86 East American Falls Interchange Project (2004 - Current)**  
The project builds on alternatives studied in the East American Falls Interchange Feasibility Study (2003) and developed an additional alternative for consideration. The alternatives are being investigated at a conceptual level of engineering.

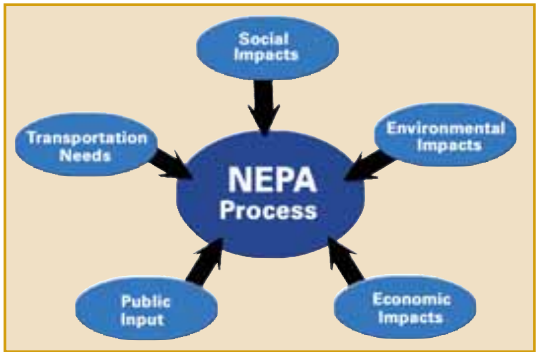
An environmental analysis of four *Build Alternatives* and a *Do Nothing Alternative* was performed. The environmental analysis provides a description of the proposed project, the existing environment, and the anticipated benefits and effects of the alternatives. Topics examined for potential impacts include: access, neighborhoods or services, economic disruption, minorities, low income populations, displacements, cultural and historic sites, FAA airspace intrusion, prime farmland and parcel splits, air quality, stream alteration/ encroachment, wetlands, sole source aquifer, and water quality.

Input concerning potential impacts or issues the alternatives may create was gathered from the public and public agencies at meetings in May and August 2005. Public input along with input from public agencies, plus the environmental analysis and engineering studies will be used to determine a final “preferred” alternative.

# Environmental Process

The project follows the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to develop a preferred alternative that meets all safety, environmental and design criteria of the project. Federally funded projects require that a complete environmental analysis be performed. NEPA requires that:

- Federally funded projects be examined for potential impacts to cultural and environmental resources.
- Impacts to cultural and environmental resources be balanced with the public’s need for a safe and efficient transportation system.
- An environmental document be prepared for any project likely to have cultural or environmental impacts.



**Public Hearing**  
**Tuesday, September 26**  
**4 - 7 p.m.**  
**William Thomas Middle School**  
**Cafeteria**  
**355 Bannock Avenue**  
**American Falls, Idaho**

**What’s Next?**  
Comments and suggestions regarding the preferred alternative location will be weighed in conjunction with environmental and engineering considerations to decide which alternative to carry forward into the final design. A preferred alternative is anticipated to be selected by late 2006.



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For additional information visit ITD’s web site at: [www.itd.idaho.gov](http://www.itd.idaho.gov) - click on *Get Involved; Southeast Idaho; I-86 East American Falls Interchange Project*

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Persons needing an interpreter or special accommodations are urged to contact the ITD Public Involvement Coordinator at (208) 334-4444 or TDD/TDY (208) 334-4458.

Se les recomienda a las personas que necesitan un intérprete o arreglos especiales que llamen a la coordinadora de participación pública, al (208) 334-4444 ó TDD/TDY (208) 334-4458.



Idaho Transportation Department September 2006



# Project Facts

Key Number: 8671  
Project Number: BR-1721(102)

The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is preparing environmental documentation, preliminary engineering and design to replace the East American Falls Interchange at exit 40 over I-86.

# Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to eliminate the potential hazard posed by the existing bridge over I-86/US 30 at exit 40 and to bring all substandard geometric elements of the interchange up to current design standards.

The existing vertical clearance at Exit 40 over I-86 eastbound is substandard, the corner radii at the ramp intersections are inadequate for current truck design, the off-ramp widths are inadequate, and the westbound on-ramp has inadequate acceleration distance. To meet the current design standards and increase overall safety, it is necessary to provide a new interchange.

The existing I-86 overpass structure is deficient in clearance and the structure is urgently in need of repairs or replacement due to cracked girders and other structural elements resulting from age and wear. In addition, there is concern with deficient turning radii at the off-ramp intersections with State Highway 39 (Idaho 39), which is the principal arterial route along the north edge of American Falls Reservoir to the City of Blackfoot. Idaho 39 carries heavy truck traffic related to the agricultural operations, mainly sugar beet production, in Power and Bingham counties. During the fall of 2005, the number of truck trips doubled at this intersection as a result of the elimination of the freight train which had previously carried almost 50% of the sugar beets harvested. (*Purpose and Need Statement from ITD Form 0654 Environmental Evaluation*)



## Alternatives Being Evaluated

The following *Do Nothing Alternative* and the four *Build Alternatives* and have been identified:

### Alternative 1: Do Nothing

This alternative involves doing nothing and it would fail to satisfy the purpose and need of the project. Alternative 1 serves as a baseline for comparison against which the other alternatives considered.



### Alternative 2: Build 50' East

This alternative involves constructing a new bridge structure and ramps approximately 50 feet east of the existing location. This location would allow for the existing bridge structure and ramps to remain open during construction. Idaho 39 would be realigned with the new bridge. The westbound on-ramp and the eastbound off-ramp would be realigned with Idaho 39 to provide 90-degree intersections.



### Alternative 3: Build 250' West

This alternative involves constructing a new bridge 250 feet west of the existing location, and includes reconstructing the westbound on- and off-ramps and the eastbound off-ramp. Portions of the eastbound on-ramp would be retained and improved to meet current design standards. Idaho 39 would be realigned and have slightly less stopping sight distance than the existing alignment. All improvements would meet current design standards.



### Alternative 4: Build 1,000' West

This alternative involves constructing a new interchange approximately 1,000 feet west of the existing location. Idaho 39 would be relocated under I-86, requiring a new underpass and two new bridges (I-86 eastbound and I-86 westbound over Idaho 39).

Alternative 4 would require the acquisition of 10.81 acres of agricultural property and 5.08 acres of commercial property. A hotel on the south side of I-86 and a shop building on the north side of I-86 would be relocated. This alternative would require realignment of approximately 800 feet of the existing canal and service road.



### Alternative 5: Build 1,500' West

This alternative involves constructing a new interchange approximately 1,500 feet west of the existing location. Idaho 39 would be relocated under I-86, requiring a new underpass and two new bridges (I-86 eastbound and I-86 westbound over Idaho 39).

Alternative 5 would require the acquisition of 13.75 acres of agricultural property and 2.03 acres of commercial property. A shop building on the north side of I-86 would be relocated. Farming operations and a gas station, access and underground storage tank would also be affected. Alternative 5 would require realignment of approximately 2,100 feet of the existing canal and service road, or bridge canal at crossings.

## Alternative Comparison

	Alternative 1 Do Nothing	Alternative 2 50' East	Alternative 3 250' West	Alternative 4 1,000' West	Alternative 5 1,500' West
Construction Cost	\$0	\$4,360,000	\$6,472,000	\$8,238,000	\$8,392,000
Right-of-Way Cost	\$0	\$0	\$21,000	\$833,000	\$236,000
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$0	<b>\$4,360,000</b>	<b>\$6,493,000</b>	<b>\$9,071,000</b>	<b>\$8,628,000</b>
Commercial Property	0 acres	0 acres	0 acres	5.08 acres	2.03 acres
Agricultural Property	0 acres	0 acres	3.52 acres	10.81 acres	13.75 acres
<b>Total Right-of-Way Land Required</b>	<b>0 acres</b>	<b>0 acres</b>	<b>3.52 acres</b>	<b>15.89 acres</b>	<b>15.78 acres</b>
Parcels Displaced	0	0	0	2	1
Parcels Impacted	0	0	1	7	8
Canal Relocation	0 ft.	0 ft.	0 ft.	800 ft.	2,100+ ft.
Construction Duration	0 mos.	16 mos.	16 mos.	18 mos.	21 mos.

## How can I learn more about the project and provide testimony on the alternatives?

**Attend the public hearing.** ITD will conduct a public hearing to record written and oral testimony regarding the preferred alternative location for the I-86 East American Falls Interchange Project. The hearing will be held Tuesday, Sept. 26, from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at William Thomas Middle School Cafeteria, 355 Bannock Ave., American Falls, Idaho. Project team members will be available to answer questions.

**Visit ITD's web site.** [www.itd.idaho.gov](http://www.itd.idaho.gov) - click on *Get Involved*; *Southeast Idaho*; *I-86 East American Falls Interchange Project*

### Submit testimony:

- Fax to the attention of the ITD Public Involvement Coordinator, at (208) 334-8563
- Mail to: Public Involvement Coordinator, Idaho Transportation Department, P.O. Box 7129, Boise, ID 83707-1129
- E-mail to: [comments@itd.idaho.gov](mailto:comments@itd.idaho.gov)

Testimony postmarked by Oct. 10 will become part of the public record for this project.